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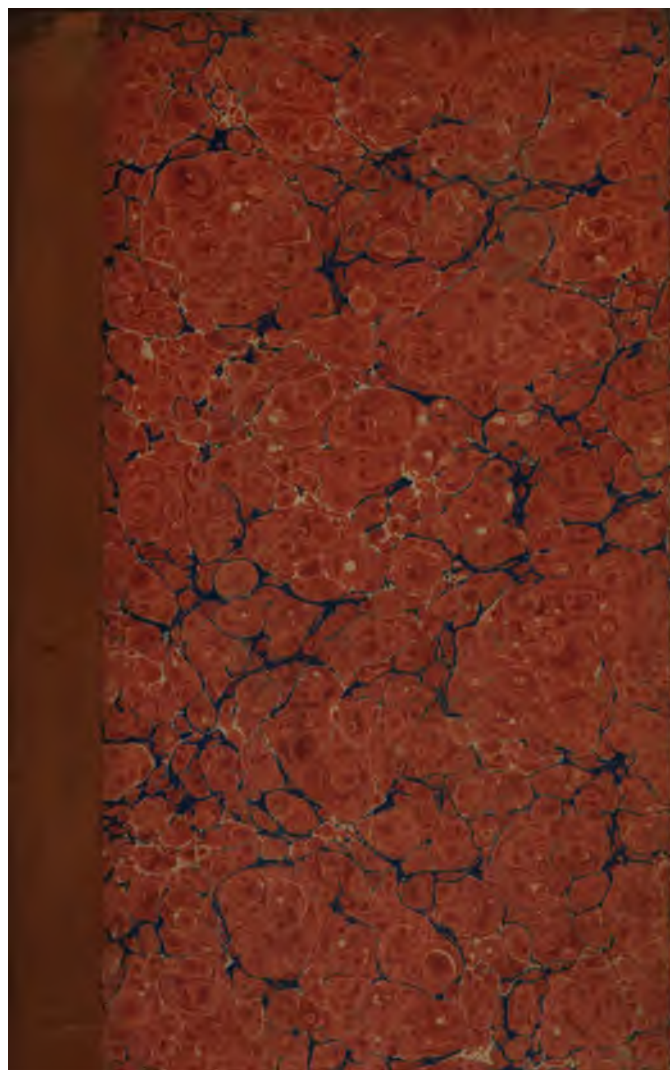
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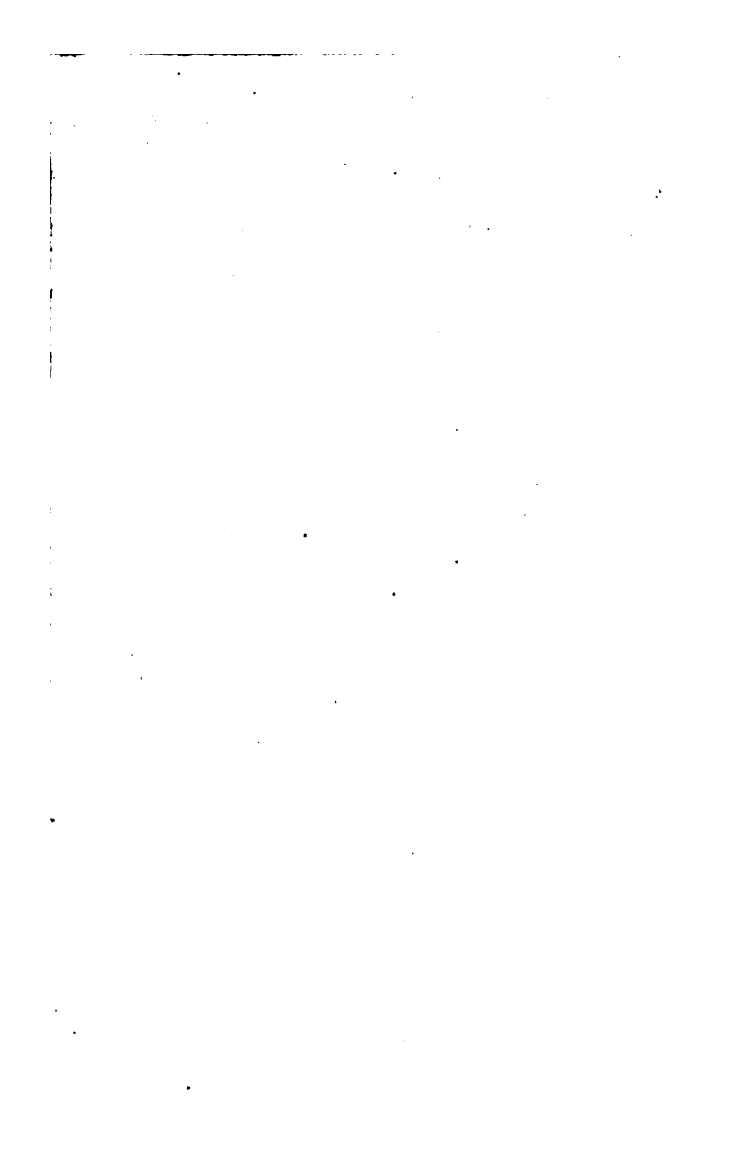
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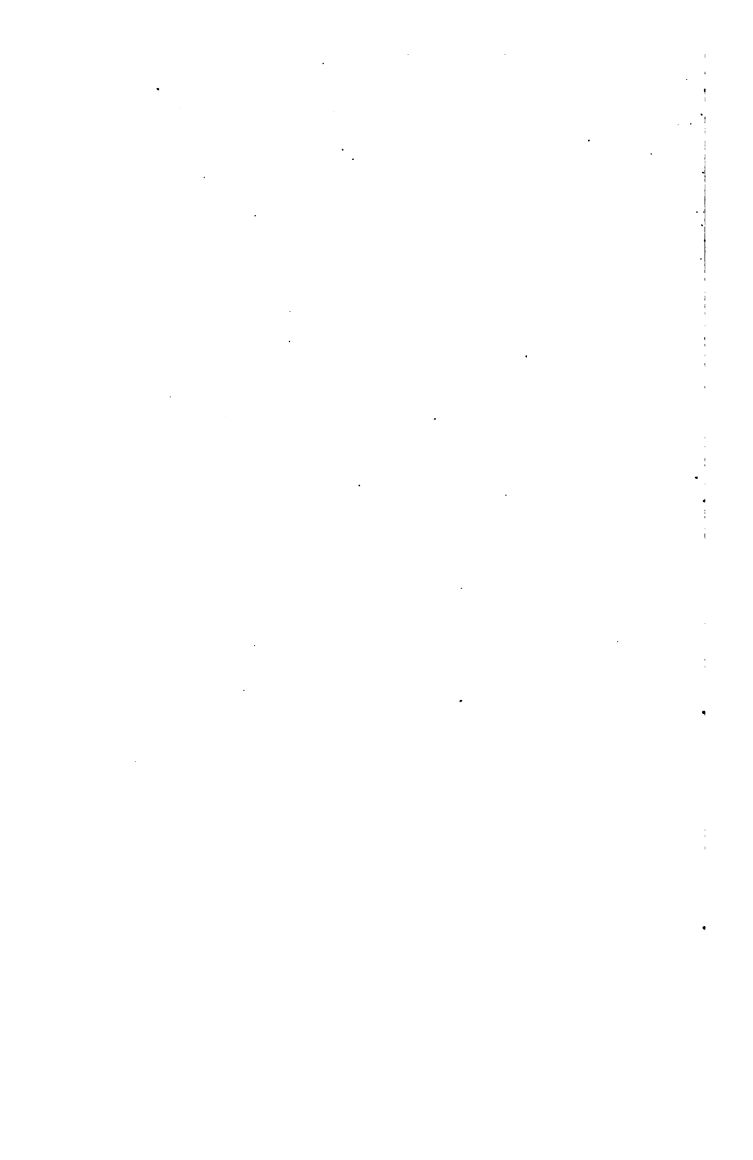
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48. 1711.







A FEW WEEKS NEAR THE COAST;

OR,

CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN

EMILY AND MARIA.

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A FEW WEEKS NEAR THE COAST.

MARIA was the youngest daughter of a pretty large family, and had been for some months the companion of her aged grandfather, whose residence was near the village of ——. Her sister Emily had been sojourning for a few weeks with beloved relatives in one of the northern sea-ports, and having paid a passing visit to her home, hastened to supply Maria's place, whose stay in the country had been unusually protracted. We pretend not to detail the various minute inquiries after the endeared home-circle, and other friends; but proceed at once to relate the subsequent conversation of the young people.

CONVERSATION I.

Maria. WELL, Emily, I am glad you have come, it is so long since we met; and now the time for our being together is so very short, that we must make the most of it. I suppose

you will have much to tell me that has transpired while I have been in this sequestered spot, and also about your wanderings in the North.

Emily. I gave you many sketches in my notes, the filling up of which I am prepared to supply, whenever you are disposed to require it. But, first, do you remember the day of our last parting?

Maria. O yes, that I do : nor will it be hastily forgotten. Was it not profitable to hear that aged pilgrim tell us how, while passing through the floods, the Lord kept his head above the waters ? And like him, when called to endure tribulation, would I desire *greatly* to praise the Lord.

Emily. It was indeed a fine lesson for us, to be pondered in bright days, and practised in dark ones. And there was something else that afternoon on which I wrote a *nota bene* ;—an observation of the Minister with whom we had a short interview.

You will recollect that some recent instances were mentioned in which we had seen the grace of God : and then, speaking of the efforts made by the church to diffuse the knowledge of Christ, while rejoicing in their increased amount, he remarked : “ The Christian activities

of the present day are not sufficiently devotional : there is too much external excitement, and too little prayer."

I have often thought of this observation. It is indeed true that there are too many who say, with Jehu, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts;" and too few marked on the forehead, because they sigh and cry for the abominations of the land. The tendencies of the present age are to unceasing motion : everything around us is busy ; and it behoves Christians, as such, to be untiringly active too ; their efforts should be sanctified by devotion. If we would be extensively useful, we must have such a measure of divine influence as can only be obtained in answer to fervent, believing supplication. It is awfully possible to be outwardly diligent in seeking to spread the Gospel of our salvation, and yet neglect with strong crying and tears to urge the petition, "Thy kingdom come." When the church gives itself continually to prayer, then shall we have the dawning of the day when God shall say, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Maria. You gave me a brief outline of a
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touching incident related at the Missionary-Meeting in ———. I should be glad to hear further details.

Emily. Most cheerfully will I comply with your request, to the best of my recollection. The scene was, if I mistake not, the blood-stained city of Kumasi. The Rev. George Chapman was standing by the sick-bed of a converted Ashanti Chief. "Massa," said the suffering man, "you one day tell us there is no sickness in heaven." "I did," replied the Missionary; "for the Book says so; and if you, as a sinner saved by grace, are so happy as to get there, you will suffer no more." He lay still awhile, and then said, "I feel my disease strong upon me; I know I must die; but O what a glad thought, when I get to heaven I shall be sick no more!" Again he remained silent for a few minutes, and then observed, "Massa, you once tell us we should know our friends in heaven." "I said so," replied Mr. C.; "for I believe that such will be the case." Again there was a pause: and then the dying believer, addressing his beloved Minister, said, "Massa, when I get to heaven, I will go first to where Jesus Christ is, and having seen him, come back to the door of the

place, and sit down there watching till you come : when you arrive, I will take you by the hand, and leading you among the Chiefs and people, say to them, 'This is the man who first told me the good news of salvation ;' and then we will go together to where Jesus is, and dwell in his presence for ever." O, Maria, when you and I enter through the gate into the city, if there be none waiting at the door to greet our arrival, may there be some to follow after, and hail us as the instruments of leading them to Jesus !

Maria. Most earnestly do I add my Amen to that prayer. When standing with the innumerable multitude before the throne, I should like, in looking through the shining ranks, to recognise some whom I had been permitted to win to the cross ; and were none forthcoming, it would almost be enough to make me blush even in heaven,—seek to hide in a corner,—and long to come back to earth awhile to work for God. I could scarce endure a glance at the Saviour's eye : its very tenderness would reproach me, and seem to say, "I gave my life a ransom for yours : how is it you never told others how I loved them even unto death ?"

Emily. To avoid such feelings *then*, (if such can be in heaven,) let us *now* be up and doing. So let us live and labour that whenever called hence we may be able to say, "I have finished the work thou didst give me to do."

"The vineyard of our Lord
Before his labourers lies;
And lo! we see the vast reward
That waits them in the skies."

Maria. May it throughout our life be shown that we deeply feel the solemn truths on which we have been discoursing !

And now, sister, will you tell me about your visit to Shields ?

Emily. I left home on Friday, June —, 1847 ; and when my journey ended, I had the pleasure of recognising at the station well-known faces. By the good hand of our God upon me, I was preserved from all danger, and found our beloved friends in health. Next morning, Elizabeth, Isabel, and I had a walk to Tynemouth ; but the day being windy, we thought it prudent to curtail our perambulations, and forthwith returned. You know how I love to gaze upon the vast unfathomable ocean ; and I cannot tell you half the thoughts which came rushing over the mind when I

first beheld it again. You shall have just one, —the remark of a beloved Minister when speaking of the low attainments with which Christians in general are content, and the vastness of the salvation we may enjoy even on earth: “We have trifled by the coast long enough: let us loose off from the shore, and plunge away into the ocean.”

Maria. And where did you worship on the Sabbath?

Emily. I accompanied our kind friends Mr. and Mrs. G. to the chapel they regularly attend. And none of the good things heard that day produced a deeper impression than this one brief sentence: “We are now preparing an account which must be given in at the judgment-day.” Let this truth, dear Maria, be continually remembered; let us “bind it for a sign upon our hand, and as frontlets between our eyes,” and we shall feel it stimulate us to become the manner of persons we ought to be. On Tuesday we were again at Tynemouth; and while sitting on the banks to rest, a poor Irish woman came up to us, stopped, and though she did not beg in words, her manner and appearance did so most impressively. We gave her a trifle, and

spoke a little on things belonging to her peace. She poured out her blessings and prayers : " May yours be a very happy life," she said ; and then added, " Indeed, it is so : you have happiness about you." " I am truly happy," was the thankful reply ; " for I love the Saviour ; his peace fills my heart : while I stay upon earth he will be with me, and afterward take me to behold his glory." There was something about the poor woman so interesting that I wrote down her name as one to be remembered at the throne of grace.

On Wednesday afternoon I was at a class-meeting, and heard some meek simple followers of the Lamb declare how divine grace was hallowing their hearts, and sustaining their minds amid the chequered scenes of this mortal life. That afternoon a lady belonging to one of the Scotch churches took tea at cousin's. I accompanied her to a prayer-meeting, and heard a most interesting exposition of the former part of Psalm xviii. I do love to look at the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, through a microscope, in order to discern those minute and exquisite beauties which a passing glance can never reveal.

Maria. I should think, Emily, you felt
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rather strange, when your walks were all for health and pleasure, as you are so fond of connecting other objects with them, and like so well to blend the useful with the agreeable.

Emily. It did seem odd to be out so often, and have no calls to make on the Lord's afflicted ones; no opportunity of seeing how the Refiner was brightening his gold in the furnace; and no work in the way of seeking to guide wandering feet into the path of peace. But I felt that one great duty was, to seek the improvement of health, and the restoration of physical energy; still keeping in mind, however, that if I did not find, I must try to make, opportunities for usefulness. And soon the Saviour showed me various little ways in which I might work for him; and I felt so thankful to be sent on a few errands, during that season of rest and recreation! for well do I know it to be my duty ever to be intent on my Master's business. By the way, this expression is one of large import, and not by any means to be restricted to what, for the sake of distinction, we will call "sacred employments;" but applicable to everything a Christian has to do, belonging to the life that now is, as well as that which is to come:

“All may of God partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture for his sake
Will not grow bright and clean.”

It is our privilege to say, “Every work I do below, I do it to the Lord;” and when we set the Lord continually before us, because He is at our right hand, we shall not be moved.

Maria. You would find it a source of interest to be surrounded by so many lovely children.

Emily. I did indeed! Isabel was a lively companion in our walks; and as for baby, I often sat watching his “bright smiles of infant loveliness,” wondering what thoughts were filling his mind, and half longing for powers of discernment that would help me to penetrate the secret.

Friday evening we spent at Tynemouth with Mrs. Y., and had a pleasant walk almost to Cullercoats. When looking at the rocks, I felt the force of those scriptural metaphors which speak of Christ as a rock,—

“The Rock that never can remove,
The Rock of sure eternal love.”

Mrs. Y. remarked, she was reminded of one of the predicted scenes of the judgment-day, when the wicked shall say to the rocks and moun-

tains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." (Rev. vi. 16.) If anything could cover from omniscient eyes, it might seem to be mountains and rocks; but can any hide where God shall not see? I need not describe the conversation with Mrs. Y., further than by saying that it was just after my own heart. You well know my favourite topics; and are also aware that they are treated with great delicacy, and, unless duty require it, seldom introduced except in the presence of those whose hearts can beat responsive to the tone. Two interesting young ladies, nieces to Mrs. Y., were of the party; and while they were showing me some of the beauties of the coast, I longed to speak to them of Him who is fairer than the sons of men, and "altogether lovely;" but language and courage both failed me. However, having in my bag some little books calculated to recommend religion to the young, I asked their aunt to be so kind as present one to each: it was the only reparation for my timidity I could just then think of; and though I would dread hiding my faults from myself,—as in that case they can never be cured,—yet I have thought

since, that perhaps, in this instance, the mode adopted was the more excellent way. Young ladies, as well as others, must be witnesses for their Master ; but theirs must be an inobtrusive testimony, borne with meekness of wisdom. While the influence is felt, the person exerting it should, in many cases at least, be hidden ;—like the violet, whose fragrance often delights us long before we have traced the sweet and modest little flower to its hiding-place. But we have now got to the close of my first week from home ; and I think our conversation has been long enough for one sitting. A kind good night to you, dear Maria.

Maria. Good night, Emily.

CONVERSATION II.

Maria. WELL, Emily, are you disposed to talk ? for I am prepared to be a very attentive listener.

Emily. I am quite at your service, my dear sister, and will commence with the history of the following Monday. Mrs. Y. and I had arranged, weather, &c., permitting, to spend it in traversing the coast, so far as our strength

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would allow. Arrived at Tynemouth, I felt rather faint from the heat, and was glad to stop at one of the refreshment-stalls to procure a glass of lemonade. The woman of whom I purchased it, began to tell me, she had scarcely been able to make it fast enough for her customers the day before. "What! do you sell on Sundays?" I asked, quite startled and shocked. "O, yes!" she replied: "it is our best day. We could not live without the Sunday trade." I sought to show her the iniquity and ungodliness of the practice; but to every argument adduced, she seemed to think the reply, "I have a small family, and we must live," quite sufficient. I had yet to learn the appalling extent to which Sabbath-breaking is carried on in that neighbourhood; how hundreds come by the railway to spend the Lord's day in taking their own pleasure; sanctuaries being thinned, and inns and refreshment-houses crowded; besides other evils, more numerous than we can name. O, Maria, when will the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; and the curse of wholesale, systematic Sabbath-breaking be removed from our land? The Sabbath used to be desecrated by individuals, or at most by small parties;

but now the people combine in multitudes to despise the Lord's day, and violate the sign established between God and man. As though individual transgression were not enough, how many seem ambitious to obtain the memorial of Jeroboam,—“ Who did sin, and who made Israel to sin ! ” How fearful is the condemnation incurred by those who, for the sake of worldly gain, tempt the people to trample on this hallowed institution ; to convert the blessed Sabbath, made for man, into a chosen season for sinning with greediness ! When the Sabbath is forgotten, what obstructions in the downward course are taken out of the way ! and the speed at which the sinner travels to the city of destruction is fearfully increased. How wonderful the long-suffering which bears with a nation of evil-doers, a people laden with iniquity ! though every single transgression of any creature is just as abhorrent to that God who is glorious in holiness as was the first sin which astonished and polluted the universe.—To return to the poor woman. I went several times afterwards to speak with her, and leave tracts ; sometimes buying articles I should not otherwise have purchased, by way of procuring a better welcome and more careful reading for
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the tracts. I could not just then meet with any directly on Sabbath-breaking : but I had not been long at home, before I found one exactly appropriate, and immediately sent it by post to a pious person in Tynemouth, mentioning particulars, which would enable her to identify the poor woman, as I had neglected to inquire the name, and beseeching her to pray, that one who made the Sabbath a season of traffic, might learn to reverence the Lord's day. But how far have I wandered from our excursion !

Maria. You certainly have ; but it is an interesting digression. May that poor woman learn to call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and be it ours to join with her in the keeping of that eternal rest the saints enjoy in heaven.

Emily. I found my kind friend at the haven ; and having lingered awhile there, we repaired to her lodgings, whence we set out with bags stored with books and tracts. A young lady was there, recently returned from France, where she had been educated in the house of a Protestant Minister. Before starting, a tract was given to the person with whom Mrs. Y. lodged. She expressed much gratitude, and

added, "I will try to do good with it." These words were like sweet music in my ears ; and the immediate though unuttered response was, "In that case, I will furnish you with several more." Is it not delightful, Maria, thus to meet with followers of Him who went about doing good ?

We proceeded as pedestrians do, sometimes keeping a straight course, and anon stopping to gaze at things curious or beautiful, and thinking nothing of taking a winding path to gratify the desire for closer inspection. Our movements were just as fancy directed ; and yet we had prudence enough to make our stages short, and resting-places frequent. Arrived at the pleasant village of Whitley, we sought out the house to which visitors are wont to resort ; and while refreshment was preparing, had the luxury of resting amid every accommodation we could desire, and took out our books by way of having a little food for the mind. Afterwards, those who were so disposed, proceeded towards St. Mary's Island, while Miss C. remained on the rocks reading. I very much enjoyed Mrs. Y.'s conversation : she has had what you and I cannot yet say much about,—experience ; and, to use a com-

mon expression, I felt I was gaining more knowledge of men and things.

The following Wednesday was a most interesting day. I hope there may be results which shall call forth grateful joy in eternity. One of our most gifted Ministers was to preach in the afternoon and evening in a neighbouring town ; whither I had aforetime intended to go, in search of a former Sunday-scholar whom you have often heard me mention. I had been told she was working in a pottery in that place, but could get no further information : however, I found her with much less difficulty than could have been expected, the Lord directing my steps. She at once recognised me ; and owned that though she had chosen the way of transgressors, there were times when the memory of early instruction came over her ; but I was grieved to find that a letter sent some months before, was still unread, because she had “ so forgotten her scholarship.” I asked if she ever went to chapel, ever bent the knee in prayer, or read the Scriptures. Sad were the honest answers she gave me. I found she had no Bible, and had almost forgotten how to read. I engaged to furnish her with a copy of the Scriptures, if she would promise once

more to learn to read the sacred pages; nor did I wish to extort a promise lightly, but reminded her that the great God heard all we spoke. After some words of solemn warning and affectionate entreaty, I left, telling her I would see her again; and went in quest of two little girls, who, when residing in ——, attended for a few weeks my Sabbath-evening class. The cordial reception given me by the family was almost overpowering. The elder of the children went to the book-shelves, and took up a book, in which a letter was carefully deposited. She showed me the address; and I saw it was one I had written to her a few weeks before, at a time when I scarcely knew how to spare a few minutes for the purpose; but to see the value put upon that simple letter, repaid the effort a hundred fold. Having purchased a Bible, and written Sarah's name in it, I went again to the pottery, in company with Miss M., a pious young lady, who kindly engaged to look after the poor wanderer, and told me she was acquainted with the owner of the pottery,—a pious, active Wesleyan, to whom she would mention the case of the poor girl: so that Sarah can no longer say, "No man careth for my soul." Miss M. also agreed to

join me in earnest prayer for the blessing of God upon our efforts to pluck this brand from the burning. We had much sweet discourse on things touching the kingdom; and then went to the house of prayer, where with joy we drew water out of the wells of salvation. I might tell you the text and several particulars of the sermon, but will only mention the deep impression made by two lines of one of our admirable hymns, sung at the close of the service:—

“ So, not heaven's host shall swifter move,
Than we on earth to do thy will.”

We spent the interval of worship with a family personally unknown to me until that day, but with whom my companion was well acquainted; and I had been asked by an intimate friend in —, to call and inquire after their health, &c.: and long will the kind and courteous welcome to a stranger be remembered. I contrived to learn a new pattern of knitting; a beautiful specimen of which had attracted my attention,—for knowledge of that kind is not to be despised: and when the hour for public worship approached, we set off for chapel. I cannot attempt to describe that excellent sermon: truly we sat under the

Saviour's shadow with great delight : he had brought us to his banqueting-house, and his banner over us was love. Thrills of deep and hallowed yet irrepressible emotion went through that large congregation, and many a heart felt what Peter uttered on Mount Tabor, "Master, it is good for us to be here." I could not stay to drink in the benediction, but left immediately after the collection. Mr. L. accompanied me to the ferry ; and perhaps no language can express our feelings more exactly than the following lines :—

" The Lord my righteousness, I praise,
I triumph in the love divine ;
The wisdom, wealth, and strength of grace,
In Christ to endless ages mine !"

Maria. You might well call a day like that interesting and delightful. I do not wonder that you love to recall its sacred enjoyments : but go on.

Emily. One evening in the same week I was introduced to a young lady, who may probably never cross my desert-path again. I was so glad to be told afterwards of the efforts she makes for the promotion of the Saviour's glory ! On all her labours may the Lord command his blessing !

The following Tuesday, I bade a half-farewell to the beloved relatives with whom I had been sojourning, and went to stay awhile at uncle's pleasant residence. I call it a half-farewell; for I still saw some of the family daily. The afternoon was spent with followers of the Saviour, who feel themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, but declare plainly that they are seeking a country. It was the evening for week-night service in our chapel. The Minister's subject was Enoch's walk with God. "Enoch drew his companion from heaven: no lower fellowship than that of Deity would do for him." Shall anything less satisfy us, Maria?

Maria. It is evident, Emily, that you are not remarkably given to sight-seeing, or you had been more eager to visit the adjacent places, especially as conveyances are so numerous and rapid.

Emily. A walk by the sea-side, or in the fields, has far greater attractions for me than the bustle of large towns; but all are pleasant in their season, and I had several railway trips after this. An interesting young lady came on a visit to uncle's, and one fine day we set off together for Newcastle. A few years had

passed since either of us had been there before, but several streets we recognised as old acquaintances. The friends who went with us were well versed in the history of the town,—one of them especially ; and many interesting facts were mentioned as we went along. I looked with a sort of affection upon the old Orphan-House. What hath God wrought !

“ Who the victory gave,
The praise let Him have,
For the work he hath done :
All honour and glory to Jesus alone.”

I need not describe the public buildings ; for you have seen them all, I believe,—unless it be the Castle, and that I think you never explored. We went through the different apartments, and stayed not till we reached the top ; for we were intent upon the prospect. When in the church of St. Nicholas, I had seated myself in the Mayor's chair : the door-keeper came up and said, “ You will never be the Mayor ; but you may be Lady Mayoress : ” a most unlikely dignity for me, I thought, and unenvied as unlikely ; the mansion-house I covet is in the skies :—

"I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home."

It is always interesting to walk through the different sections of a Museum; but to me something tantalizing also. Were I resident near one, often would my steps be bent thither; but to go for half an hour, to gaze on such a variety of objects,—beautiful, curious, rare, and antique,—is almost bewildering: it cannot add much to the stores of knowledge, though it may serve to show us our ignorance; and, perhaps, that is the next best thing.

Maria. Were you at the Asylum for the Blind?

Emily. O yes! that is a place too interesting by far to be passed by. We brought away some specimens of their work, each purchasing an article of the same kind, as a sort of mutual memento of the day. In one room, two fine little boys were making nets. We asked their name and birthplace. "My name is John Mac ——," said the younger; "and I was born at Canterbury." "Have you not made a mistake?" said one of the ladies. "You have got a Scotch name: do you not think you come from Scotland?" and she turned to the elder. "I don't know where I was

born," he said : " but if Johnnie comes from Canterbury, I do too ; for we are brothers." This little boy was taken to the school-room to show us how they read, and cipher, &c. ; and then he played several tunes. He was an arch, quick little fellow ; but withal conscious of his abilities : he gladly played, for he knew he could do that well ; but was unwilling to sing, evidently because aware that in vocal music he did not excel. I cannot tell you how glad it makes me to see science and art thus combining to lessen the sum of human misery : never do they appear so lovely as when enlisted in the service of benevolence. Many improvements have been introduced, and many valuable discoveries made, during your short life and mine ; but I do not remember one that gave me delight equal to that I felt when told there was a Bible for the blind, or rather, (for the thing was done by degrees,) that a portion of the Scriptures was prepared in raised letters for their use : and when a specimen was exhibited at one of our Anniversary Bible Meetings, well do I remember my eagerness to see it. Sometimes when my Sunday-schoolers are listless over their Scripture lesson, I remind them of the aged blind man, who,

when presented with a portion of the Book of God, in embossed characters, mourned because age had so benumbed his fingers that he could not trace the letters, and actually had recourse to blisters in order to recover his former keen sense of touch. Nor would I forget that I often need myself to be stirred up by way of remembrance.

Maria. And where did you spend the next day?

Emily. I undertook to accompany Miss S. in a sea-side ramble. We dined at Cullercoats, and returned to Tynemouth in time to witness the gay assemblage in the Castle-yard, while the soldiers—that is to say, the band—were exhibiting their musical skill for the gratification of the visitors. You are aware, that, during the season, it is quite a fashionable promenade on Friday afternoons, and I think on Mondays too; but I felt solitary in the midst of the gay throng, and wondered where those hundreds of immortal beings would spend their eternity: for it seemed as though the joys of many of them were

“Of the borealis race,

Which flit ere we can find their place.”

Had as much care been bestowed on inward

adornings of the mind, as had evidently been lavished on external appearance, what specimens had been there of moral and spiritual excellence !

My companion, Miss S., became to me a source of deep interest : she is a lovely girl, and I longed that to natural amiability there might be superadded the beauties of holiness. While we were mutually enjoying various agreeable recreations, I sought gently to lead her to thoughts of that better and brighter world, where are fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. I felt how it behoved me to watch my own heart and life, lest anything she saw in me should prove a stumbling-block in her way : for it is a fact, solemn as true, that not a word, or an action, but exerts an influence on listeners and spectators, according to its kind. A word once uttered, a deed once done, is beyond our further control : the immediate, and, to us, visible effects, may soon be spent ; the remote ones, who shall calculate ? Long after we are slumbering in the grave, they may exert a power over others bearing on their eternal condition. "How then ought we on earth to live ?" O, Maria, were there no other reasons, what motives our relations to

others supply for thinking on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, lovely, and of good report; and what inducements to cultivate all qualities wherein there is any virtue and any praise! Mr. M'Cheyne says, "Believers should not only be like a garden which has fruit, and so is useful; we ought also to have spices, and so be attractive." I sought to represent religion to Miss S. as the zest of life's joys; for as yet she scarcely needs it as the balm of life's ills, her bright morning being still unclouded.

O, Maria, "we exist under an obligation to be happy!" We are bound not only to *be* happy, but also to *appear* so; to let the world see that ours is a *satisfying portion*; that we not only have unutterable blessedness in prospect, but solid joys in possession. Those who go hanging their head like a bulrush, do no credit to their profession: the children of Sion are to be joyful in their King; the saints are to shout aloud for joy. We might if we would, so dwell in the suburbs of Emanuel's city, as to be able to say,

"The choral harmonies of heaven
Earth's Babel tongues o'erpower."

True, we have cloudy and dark days some-
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times ; but by and by the cloud breaks, and the shadows fly away. In our sorest tribulation, we who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us have not consolation merely, but *strong* consolation ;

“ And a hope so much divine,
May trials well endure.”

Maria. Yes, dear Emily, I know it is no hyperbole to sing,

“ When my sorrows most increase,
Then the strongest joys are given :
Jesus comes with my distress,
And agony is heaven.”

CONVERSATION III.

Maria. How long were you and Miss S. together ?

Emily. Not quite a fortnight. She is an only child, and could not be spared longer. We were sitting in the breakfast-room one morning,—I was reading the 49th Psalm, and when I came to the 8th verse, “ The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever,” I could read no more, but put down
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the Bible, intensely longing that my dear companion would make it her first concern, her single care, to acquaint herself with Him in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life; "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of all our sins." Before parting, I gave her a little book, and wrote on the blank page, "Psalm xlix., 8th verse."

Maria. Had you any other excursion that week?

Emily. No; we made Saturday a day of rest; accounting it wise to bring moderation into everything. The fine weather tempting us to abjure all roofs, we took our books and work into the garden. In the afternoon I had a knitting lesson from Mrs. E., as I wished to learn how to manufacture some little articles which have a ready sale in Missionary baskets; and everything is beautiful in its season.

Maria. Accustomed to inland life, did you feel any interest in the shipping?

Emily. O yes! I am a citizen of the world, you know, Maria; and whatever concerns mankind concerns me; though, by the way, I am afraid that my stores of nautical knowledge might all be poured forth in a few minutes.

On Tuesday in the week ensuing, we visited several of uncle's ships, and dined on board one of them; ascending and descending by rope-ladders as best we might, though we had in part the accommodation of a wooden one, which had been made expressly for the convenience of some of the same party, who had visited that vessel a few years before. In the afternoon we had a sail some miles up the Tyne, and landed on the Durham side of the river, near the village of Hebburn; and having discussed the contents of a refreshment-basket, which the considerate Captain had put into the boat, we went in quest of roses and woodbines. Next day we had another sail: uncle went on shore at Howden, and we proceeded further up the river. I then ventured to relate to the boatman an anecdote of an aged Minister in Scotland, who was brought to God in early life. When a boy, he kept his father's sheep; they fed in a pasture near a river. While looking on the river, he was arrested by the thought, "That river is like eternity. If I go to hell, my misery will be always flowing, always flowing, like that river. If I go to heaven, my joy will be like that river." He sat and gazed day after day for hours upon the

ever-gliding stream,—became deeply concerned about his soul,—and sought and found peace through believing in Jesus. Afterwards he became a Minister. But such was the deep impression this “river” made on his mind of the never-ending state of eternity, that never, whether in prayer, or preaching, did he repeat that word without using the epithet “vast,”—a vast eternity! You know the law of adaptation is one of my favourites; and I sought to relate this incident in the mode most likely, by the Spirit’s aid, to impress one whose life had been spent in doing business on the waters. I inquired about the Mariners’ chapel, &c., &c.; but he seemed to take little interest in the matter. I could not perceive any reason to conclude that he had drunk the living streams of bliss; and could not, durst not, let go my only opportunity of inviting him to come and take the water of life freely. “Let him that heareth say, Come.” Returning, we also landed at Howden, a village interesting to me as the birth-place of a Minister who once laboured in our Circuit, many of whose sermons I can still remember, especially one on the “abundant entrance;” which was illustrated by sights he had often beheld in Shields

harbour. I cannot tell you, Maria, how many sweet thoughts I had those two afternoons on "the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." I saw, and felt too, more and more of the amplitude of Gospel blessings, so often set forth under this emblem. Being in the town in the evening, and seeing the door of one of the Scotch churches open, I went in, and heard a lecture on the former part of the Sermon on the Mount. What a delightful retreat was the Lord's house after being conversant so many hours with the bustle of the Tyne!

But are you not tired, Maria, with the tameness of my narrations?

Maria. O no, sister! I like well to hear where you have been, and what you were about.

Emily. Well then, next day I went to visit some much-esteemed friends residing in a lovely village south of the Tyne. Having to travel by two lines of railroad, I took with me the Memoir and Remains of M. M. Davidson, that the hour to be spent in the waiting-room might be a pleasant one. I had no idea there were such picturesque scenes in the neighbour-

hood. But you must not expect even a sketch ; for I have neither a painter's pencil, nor a poet's pen,—though fancy is now quite busy portraying the rich landscape, and I see it all almost with the vividness of reality. But there are reminiscences engraven on the tablets of memory far more deeply than any beauties of natural scenery,—precious lessons for a pilgrim travelling to Mount Zion, which must not by any means be forgotten ; and I do hope that a fresh impetus heavenward was that day received. Did you ever see the following beautiful lines on Malachi iii. 16 ?

“ Then they that feared the Lord spake often
 One to another, in communion sweet,
 And interchange of soul ; and God above
 Harken'd and heard ; and in his holy book,
 The book of life, their names were register'd.
 These had delights which none could take away ;
 Hopes, whose clear shining brighten'd all it touch'd,
 Made evil good, and, in the front of woe,
 Reposed in meekness like an autumn moon :
 They drank so much of heaven, it overflow'd
 In tears of joy, and songs of gratitude ;
 And in the face of ill had no concern
 But this,—to speak the heights of bliss they felt,
 And render loftier tribute to their God.”

Maria. Not that I remember : they are

truly beautiful. Why do you introduce them now?

Emily. Because by the inexplicable law of association, they entwine themselves with recollections of that visit. But enough. On Friday we had arranged to go across the Bar; but, the wind being high, we were content with a walk. Having received an invitation from one of the Superintendents, I found my way to the Sunday-school the following Sabbath morning, and was entrusted with the charge of a class, whose teacher was distant. We were not half-disposed to close the lesson when the bell rung; but the signal was peremptory, and an interesting narrative was left unfinished. In the afternoon I went with Miss E. to exchange tracts,—these employments making it quite like a Sunday at home. The district looked like a place where iniquity abounds. I fear that dwelling there are many who will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, who do evil with both hands earnestly. O, my dear sister, how energetic should Christians be in seeking to turn the ungodly from the error of their ways! Never must we deal with a slack hand, or do the Lord's work negligently. Transgressors sin in earnest; and

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ardent, zealous, thorough-going, life-like, must those be who warn the wicked of their way, to turn them from it. I know that with all this, the gentlest pity and most winning tenderness must be combined; "for the sharpest point of the two-edged sword is not death, but life." Forgive me, my beloved sister, if I say too much on this topic: I cannot help it. The words I utter are brought home to my own conscience; and I would that they should influence my life,—though so great are my short-comings, that I am often ready to exclaim with tears, "Thus saying, thou condemnest thyself!" I feel that everything we have, talents, time, gifts, graces, influence, all, all are to be pressed into the like service of personal effort for the conversion of souls. We are blessed in order to be made blessings. Each true believer—the youngest, the feeblest not excepted—is to labour to fill the world with more Christians, "to beautify it with a greater number of living temples of the Holy Ghost." It was the noble resolve of the holy James Brainerd Taylor, "I will (the Lord being my helper) think, speak, and act as an *individual*; for as such I must live, as such I must die, stand before God, and be damned or saved for

ever. I have been waiting for others. I must act as if I were the only one to act, and wait no longer." Feeling the pressure of individual obligation and responsibility, let us go and do likewise; and though we are not sufficient for these things,

" God is our strength, and through the road
We'll lean upon our helper, God."

In returning home, I saw two of the little girls who had been my scholars in the morning. They looked as though it would please them were I to speak. I therefore went up and said, " Well, should you like me to finish the story I began this morning ?" They looked their assent; and in coming from chapel in the evening, they again crossed my path. Saying " Good bye " to my companion, I slipped in between them, and told a little anecdote such as children love, making it the ground-work of a very important lesson. Probably I shall never meet those sprightly girls again, till with each of us the period of probation has terminated; but I wished that if ever they thought of the stranger who was for once their teacher, there might also and far more be the recollection of words whereby they may be saved.

Monday afternoon I had promised to spend with some friends staying at Cullercoats, and called on my way at the Mariners' Asylum, to see an aged pilgrim who lives there. After a few sweet words on the good land, whither we are journeying, we joined in prayer; and truly it was no vain thing to wait on the Lord. It would be tedious to enter into the minutiae of that evening's enjoyments: nor will I stay to detail a trip to Newcastle on Tuesday afternoon; but merely mention a visit to some rocks in the morning. We had not seen them before, and were in no haste to leave. Now we talked, and then sat musing silently, or reading. Some little children came near, to whom we spoke of Him who says that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Cousin gave them some fruit, to render the lesson sweeter. What simplicity is required in order to make truth plain to the capacity of little children! That evening we heard an anniversary sermon in — chapel; and on Wednesday I went across the water to see Sarah, my former Sunday-scholar,—having purposely chosen the noon hour in order to find her at home. I longed to pray with her as well as for her, if by any means I might prevail upon her to

attend to the things belonging to her peace. The person with whom she lodges talked fluently on religion : whether she experiences its life-giving power, I cannot say. She pressed me to call when next in that neighbourhood ; and, speaking of the happiness of Christians, observed, "Trouble never scorches their mind."

Maria. A rather interesting remark. It reminds me of the verse,

" To Him mine eye of faith I turn,
And through the fire pursue my way ;
The fire forgets its power to burn,
The lambent flames around me play."

Emily. Yes, Maria, the promise is, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isaiah xliii. 2.) Believers understand what it is to "flourish unconsumed in fire." In the evening I again visited my favourite rocks. Existence was enjoyment ;

" All around and all above,
Had this record, ' God is love.' "

Everything had some wise instruction to give. The limpets taught me how I ought to cling to the Saviour ; the rocks, standing unshaken while the waves were dashing against them,

were remembrancers of the security of those who build on the Rock of Ages. The sea led me to think of the ocean of divine love, "unfathomable in its depth, unbounded in its extent, unruffled in its flow, unlimited in its duration." May we not ask, with Kempis, "What is not tasteful to him who tasteth Thee? And him who delighteth not in Thee, what can delight?"

CONVERSATION IV.

Maria. WELL, Emily, here I am, with both ears open. What have you got for my entertainment this morning?

Emily. Suppose we begin by reading some verses I met with the other day in an old newspaper. I had not the words with me when at Shields; but there were many kindred thoughts and emotions: only I could not mould them into a form so graceful, nor deck them with garments so beautiful.

"This world of ours, if free from sin,
O, would it not be fair?
Sunshine above, and flowers beneath,
And beauty everywhere!

The air, the earth, the waters teem
With living things at play,
Glad Nature, from a thousand throats,
Pours her rejoicing lay.

“ Each balmy breeze that wanders by,
Whispers some angel-tone ;
And the clear fountains have a voice
Of music all their own.
Even green leaves on the forest-trees,
Moved by the zephyr's wing,
Make a low murmur of content
To little birds that sing.

“ The busy bees, o'er garden-flowers,
A holy song attune,
Joining with never-tiring mirth
The minstrelsy of June ;
And the great waves upon the deep,
That leap like giants free,
Add in their hollow monotone
The chorus of the sea.

“ There's beauty in the summer sky,
When, from his ocean bed,
Like a strong man refresh'd by sleep,
The sun uplifts his head ;
And when behind the western rocks,
At eventide he goes,
How beauteous are the crimson clouds
That curtain his repose !

“ Are not the grassy valleys fair,
Deck'd in their spring array ?
And the high hills with forest clad,
How beautiful are they ?

Look on the sea, that girdle vast,
Wherewith our earth is bound :
Even in fancy's wildest dreams,
Can aught so grand be found ?"

There are two verses more, but I will not trespass further on your forbearance : you will probably think my quotation already long enough.

Maria. Truly you compliment my taste by supposing it needful to apologize for calling my attention to those really poetic lines. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein ;" and how much we owe to him for having given to man

"A passion and a power his glorious works to scan !"

The long walks you took, Emily, astonish me : where did you get the strength from ?

Emily. You know the proverb, "Use and have ;" and I can assure you of its truth. I set to work gradually, and the capacity for walking grew by being employed ; and it was often my mode to choose a rocky or hilly path, by way of cultivating habits of activity and earnestness. I knew that if I wished to be strong and vigorous, I could find no means better adapted to secure the end than con-

tinuous exercise in the open air, while the ear drank in the rich melody of varied strains, and fancy swelled amid scenes whose loveliness spoke the name of Him who had made them so bright and fragrant ; for truly

“ This world is redolent of balmy things,
And fill'd with voices sweet.”

You know, Maria, that in my vocabulary “ Nature is but a name for an effect whose cause is God ;” and while admiring what are technically called “ the beauties of nature,” I felt that they were all mine “ by a peculiar right,” and “ by an emphasis of interest,”—for my Father made them : they were the workmanship of his hands, and the manifestation of his skill. To return, however, to the walking,—I made it a business. Free for awhile from regular home-engagements, I must have something to do ; for

“ Absence of occupation is not rest ;”

and I have so strong an apprehension of the truth of the next line,

“ A mind quite vacant, is a mind distress'd,”

that I take care to avoid the vacancy by seeking to be continually occupied. Yet would I ever keep this rule in view : “ Whatever

change there may be of employment, waiting upon God must be the constant disposition of the soul : we must not allow ourselves to attend on anything *beside him*, but what we attend on *for him* ; in subordination to his will, and in subserviency to his glory."

Maria. I am sometimes afraid, dear Emily, you forget that the powers of the human frame are limited ; and that all who overtask their energies, physical or mental, must sooner or later suffer for it. Is there not danger, think you ?

Emily. It may be so ; but I shrink from entertaining the thought, lest it should be a specious device of the tempter to lead me to think of myself more highly than I ought to think. How much do I owe my Lord ! and what have I ever done even to express my sense of obligation ? Yet I will strive to remember that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that we have no right to sap the foundation or injure the walls, but must preserve them in the greatest possible vigour, fit for all manner of service our God shall call for,—and yet be willing to sacrifice health, and life itself, should the cause of Christ require it. I believe Satan has tempt-

ations for the conscience which he often uses but too successfully. But, O Maria, I need the injunction, "That ye be not slothful." I have been thinking lately of Dr. Watts's hymn,

"My drowsy powers, why sleep ye so?
Awake, my sluggish soul!
Nothing has half thy work to do,
Yet nothing's half so dull."

But really you must read me a lecture on the necessity of restraining wandering thoughts, and keeping to the point in hand. I was roaming among flowers a few minutes ago, and now I am talking with all the gravity, though not with all the clearness, of a Professor of Divinity.

Maria. I will reserve my lecture until a future period. Go on, and pursue your own course, though it have as many windings as the famous Phrygian river, Meander.

Emily. Thanks for your courteous permission. If my course have turnings and windings, I believe somehow or other they all converge finally to one point,—radiate round a common centre :

"From thee, my God, my joys shall rise;
And run eternal rounds
Beyond the limits of the skies,
And all created bounds."

I have told you my enjoyments while conversing with the unintelligent creation, beholding bright objects which were unconscious of their brilliancy and gazing on lovely things which knew not they were fair. These were gratifications belonging especially, though by no means exclusively, to my solitary walks; but I was not always a recluse. Social pleasures of a high order were mine too, and "friendship by such intercourse renewed, became more friendly." There was the meeting of thought, the glow of intelligence, the interchange of sentiment, the commingling of feeling and emotion, in a word, "mind's embrace of mind." And dear as are such pleasures, there are more cherished ones still. Much sweet communion had I while we walked by the way with beloved fellow-travellers to the heavenly Canaan.—If our wilderness fellowship be so sweet, what will the rapture be when we meet before the throne? I could almost draw a map of many of the localities visited: its plan, however, would be rather unique, and some of the places called by new names. There are quiet secluded spots, one of which I would name "Gershom" (a stranger here); another would be called "Eliezer" (my God

is my help). One favourite resort would be "Jehovah Shalom;" a corresponding point "Jehovah-jireh." The place where the angels of God met me, I would call "Mahanaim:" the gentle fountain of Siloam should water the little territory; and as I knelt beside it, I would pray,—

"O grant that I, like this sweet well,
May Jesu's image bear;
And spend my life, my all, to tell
How full His mercies are!"

Maria. I wish you would draw the map, and give me a copy, that when I go into that neighbourhood, I may trace your route, and read the inscriptions you have left on the walls of your cities.

Emily. On Thursday, I waited till after the morning post-time, and then set off with a very dear friend for Cullercoats Rocks. My companion had not so much leisure as I, and was obliged to return home to dinner; but the shelter of the rocks served me as a refectory. Finding a path which would conduct me without let or hinderance to a pleasant field, I followed it; and, seating myself in comfort, took out a book from a bag pretty well stored, and continued reading until

warned by heavy rain-drops to seek for shelter. I found I must either take a circuitous path, or find some mode of crossing a little and not very transparent stream, which ran between me and the village. I asked a poor woman which was the best road. "I will show you in a moment," she said; and brought out a chair, which she placed right in the stream close to a large stone; on which I was to step, then mount the chair, next ascend the wall, and lastly, descend on dry land on the other side;—by these various gradations, being promptly extricated from the dilemma. The timely services of the poor woman were most acceptable, and rendered with a courtesy that had not disgraced a drawing-room. The little incident was mentioned to the friends in whose house I found shelter during the shower; and one of them observed, "I was once crossing a river by stepping-stones, and proceeding very cautiously, when a plain honest man called out to me in broad Scotch, to go faster, and I should go better. I found what he said quite true. And O, with what force does it apply to spiritual things!"

That shower was a most favourable occurrence for me. One of my valued friends, whose

delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates therein day and night, took up the Bible, and gave me an exposition of several passages; and then commended me in earnest prayer to that God, who "always readier is to grant, than we to ask his grace." As I was to return home in a few days, I thought I would go to Cullercoats no more, that my last recollections of the village might be associated with that season of fervent supplication. I had engaged to spend the evening with Mr. and Mrs. F., and found several other friends assembled, who had come out from the world, and were separate.

I never before had so many opportunities of familiar intercourse with Christians of other churches; and dearly do I love the Saviour's image, wherever it is found. Special regard for our own denomination does not interfere with the larger communion of the fellowship of saints. How many points there are on which we are of one mind, as well as of one heart! Now and then, but not often, we had amicable discussions on points we viewed through different media, or in diverse aspects, all the while cheerfully acknowledging the right of others to what we claim for ourselves—liberty

of private judgment. If everything be useful, which encourages reflection and independent thinking, and promotes appeals to the law and to the testimony, then our little discussions were not in vain. I desire to continue in the doctrines I have been taught, and well assured of; to "hold fast the form of sound words" I have heard, "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Never did I so feel how we need to pray, that He who has given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, may "stablish us in every good word and work,"—that is, in doctrinal truth, and practical holiness.

CONVERSATION V.

Maria. UNCLE's residence was so pleasant when I saw it early in the year, that I fancy it must be a charming place in the height of summer.

Emily. Such, indeed, it is. If true happiness were confined to localities, that might seem to be a chosen one. How many mistakes are in the world on this subject! what mul-

titudes fancy that enjoyment is a thing of place and circumstance! They know not that happiness, like heaven, is rather a state than a place; a character more than a locality. Moralizing again! you will say. Well, I will come back to the flowers which looked so gay and glad: one could hardly help saying, with Wordsworth, that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes." They flourished in such luxuriance, that I often had the pleasure of taking a bouquet to some who had no garden; and a few in the hand were almost an indispensable appendage when I set out on my walks.

"They comfort me; they whisper hope,
Whene'er my faith is dim,
That He who careth for the flowers,
Will much more care for" *me*.

Maria. Did you go any more to Cullercoats?

Emily. On Friday I walked in that direction, but stopped short of the village: on Saturday, however, my wish was overruled. Mrs. F. had planned an excursion, and kindly insisted that cousin and I should accompany her. Our terminus was one of the finest set of rocks I had ever beheld. I did

not think a treat of that kind was just then in reserve for me. Our road lay through Cullercoats: a servant followed with a provision-basket, and seemed to enjoy the ramble as much as any of us. We had no difficulty in finding an excellent substitute for a dining-table; and you would scarcely have recognised your grave sister in the lively girl, skipping about from rock to rock, with eyes beaming with gladness, and a heart overflowing with joy and thanksgiving; for in the midst of these outward delights, Jesus was my "all in all." Without him all had been a dry and thirsty land, wherein was no water. But I felt as though he were giving me the earnest of an answer to the prayer, "Purify, rejoice, and enliven my spirit, with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with abundance of joy and triumph." Mrs. F—'s conversation was specially interesting. She told us of several young ladies whom she had known, educated in Socinian error, but brought not only to a profession of evangelical truth, but to the enjoyment of its saving power. Other instructive facts were told us respecting a Christian friend of hers, who was the subject of disease which she knew must prove mortal.

There was a struggle before she was delivered from the fear of death; but grace triumphed, and the victory was complete. The Saviour "whispered his love into her heart; warned her of her approaching end." She had a strong impression that her death would take place on a certain day, at the hour for domestic worship. Her Pastor and a few select friends joined the family circle that evening:—the Minister led their devotions. The invalid knelt with the rest, but moved not when they rose; for her dwelling was no longer with men. She was bending with the seraph-throng above.

"Mingled in their song's deep swell,
Shared their joy ineffable."

The dim visions of earth were in a moment exchanged for the radiant light and glowing effulgence of heaven.

"So rapidly the soul
Unbodied takes its flight,
That scarce earth's scenery fail'd,
When heaven's broke on her sight."

Mrs. F—, and your sister, exchanged little books as remembrancers of the pleasant hours we had spent together; and in the evening I
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set off with a very dear friend for Newcastle, where we wished to spend the Sabbath; and were all Sabbaths profitable as that, well might we call them "fair buds of bliss in heavenly flowers unfolding." This is the secret:—there was more than ordinary communion with the Saviour,—refreshing, transforming, hallowing intercourse; as though it were given us to dwell "in the bright out-courts of immortal glory." One of our poets calls Sabbaths—

"Wakeners of prayer in man—his resting-bowers
As on he journeys in the narrow way;
While, Eden-like, Jehovah's walking-hours
Are waited for, as in the cool of day."

I think I may venture to say, that such epithets befit the holy day in question: would they were equally and increasingly applicable to all my Sabbaths! But, Maria, it just strikes me, you will be thinking that whatever be the constitution of my mind, the power of concentration is not strongly developed; and yet I really have a very clear perception of the value of this faculty: but, when talking with you, I speak out of the fulness of the heart: mine are not formal disquisitions, but sisterly conversations. The subject of the morning's discourse was, the different degrees of heavenly

glory. It is beyond my ability, or I would tell you the impression produced, especially by the following sentences :—" There are different departments in the church, but some work for every member. Lookers-on are deniers. Christ says, ' He that is not with me, is against me ; he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.' What did Christ come to gather ? Souls ! Those who do not gather souls to Him scatter them."

I have several times mentioned these remarks at seasonable opportunities ; and now and then have sent a copy in letters to young friends in different parts of the kingdom, with a request to show them to others ; and in some cases I know it has been done.

Maria. You make me think, Emily, of that noble-minded Negro, who, when told that his contribution towards building a house for the Lord was too large, replied, " The work of God must be done, and I may soon be dead." O, if we all felt that we must work, and work while it is day, for the night cometh, how soon would the church become " fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners !" But, Emily, your eyes are speaking, and this is their language : " There

were many other valuable thoughts in that sermon, but Maria will think me tedious."

Emily. Even so: your attempt at physiognomy is not a failure. But though I can interpret your look of permission, I will only mention one sentence more:—"Earthly Kings give the greatest honour to those who *slay* most of their foes: Christ bestows his largest rewards on those who *save* the greatest number of his enemies."

Maria. Thank you, sister, for that short but expressive sentence. I will treasure it up carefully.

Emily. Do so, dear Maria; for I long to see you "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

Too much to Christ we cannot give,
Too much we cannot do for him:
May all his love, and all his grief,
Graven on our heart for ever be!

Maria. How long did you remain in Newcastle?

Emily. Only until the Monday. Mr. and Mrs. R. had planned an excursion to Warkworth Castle, and pressed me so earnestly to accompany them, that I consented. We

started by the mail-train about half-past ten, and proceeded to the station nearest Felton; to which place we took a conveyance, as Mr. R. had business there. The drive was charming, save and except very rugged roads. Felton is a pleasant village, about midway between Morpeth and Alnwick. While Mr. R. was engaged, Mrs. R. and I had an agreeable walk, and then returned to the inn; where we read Montgomery's beautiful little poem, "At Home in Heaven,"—

"My Father's house on high!
Home of my soul! how near
At times to faith's foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!"—

and had just begun "the song of the hundred and forty-four thousand," when Mr. R. returned, having completed his business. I suppose I shall henceforth always associate these hymns with the beautiful scenery of Felton. We soon set off for Warkworth, and sweet was our conversation as we rode along: we still felt the savour of the Sabbath services, and spoke of the lessons we had learnt in the courts of the Lord. O, Maria, what a privilege it is to have—

"Days fix'd by God for intercourse with dust,
To raise our thoughts, and purify our powers ;
Periods appointed to renew our trust ;
A gleam of glory after six days' showers !"

I had heard a great deal about the magnificent scenery of the neighbourhood, but found that all had not been told me ; and perhaps the best way to confess my inability to do justice, is not to attempt description. We visited the castle, which is in a state of preservation superior to any other I have seen : in some respects, one can scarcely call it a ruin, though its roof is open to the vault of heaven. We went from window to window to view the prospect in different lights ; but had been sadly at fault if required to select the loveliest. The scenery is so rich and varied, that fancy's fairest, softest pencilling, and imagination's gayest colouring, must be brought into requisition by a master's hand ; and even then it were possible to come short. The inn to which we drove is overlooked by the castle, and many of the views are consequently the same : we hardly knew beside which of the dining-room windows to place our seat. The produce of the garden was so luxuriant that it almost seems like a synonyme for fertility ;—

but again we found ourselves in the track of Sabbath-breakers, numbers of whom had been there the day before. We sailed up the Coquet to the celebrated hermitage, the story of which you know ; and I have not alluded to the history of the castle, &c., because much more than I can tell is mentioned in "the Hand-Book." We drove to the Lesbury station, only a few miles from Alnwick, to meet the express-train, and arrived at Newcastle without any stoppage whatever ; a circumstance which reminded me that there is no such thing as moral quiescence, we are always either advancing or retrograding.

" Such a charge as we must keep,
Brooks no moment of forsaking."

But here are a few lines not inappropriate for the close of a day such as I have been describing : they are entitled "The proper use of earthly blessings."

" Few rightly estimate the worth
Of joys that spring and fade on earth.
They are not weeds we should despise,
They are not flowers of paradise,
But wild flowers in the pilgrim's way,
That cheer, but not protract his stay,

Which he dare not too fondly clasp,
Lest they should wither in his grasp ;
And yet may prize and wisely love
As proofs and types of joys above."

I was in time to save the last train to Shields, and kindly greetings were ready for me when I reached the summit of that long flight of steps. Next morning we had a farewell walk by the sea, and, in spite of ourselves, were shrinking from the thoughts of parting. The evening was spent with the beloved friends, under whose roof the first part of my visit had been passed. We had an opportunity of going to the magnesia works; and very interesting it was to witness the different processes,—not the less so, because the Martyr of Erromanga had once been there, and obtained memoranda of the manufacturing process, which he hoped to find useful on his return to the scene of his enterprising labours,—for Missionaries have to teach their people common, as well as sacred, things. Of course I soon found myself among the coral-reefed groups of the Southern Ocean; thankful for what the preaching of the Cross has already effected, and longing for the time, when in a moral sense we can say, of all these lovely islets,

“ Lo, abundantly they bloom ;
Lebanon is hither come ;
Carmel's stores they all dispense,
Sharon's fertile excellence.”

On Wednesday I bade good bye to Shields, and had a last look at Lord Collingwood's monument, which had been one of my way-marks. I need not describe the parting with beloved friends. I had a pleasant journey, and found all under the paternal roof, as well as at brother's, in good health ; and that was a distinguished mercy.

Maria. What makes you look so grave ?

Emily. I was trying to ascertain the comparative state of my moral condition ; to find out what progress had been made in my education for eternity, between that morning when father saw me into the train, at the — station, and the day when I was welcomed home again. I should like to be prepared

“ The strict account to give.”

And now, my very dear sister, I must thank you for your kind attention to my simple narrations.

Maria. Nay, Emily, I reckon that the obligation is on my side

Emily. I hope then our conversations have been mutually profitable; and while ours is the benefit, the praise we will ascribe to our Father who is in heaven. Let us close, by singing the following verse :—

“ Still may I walk as in thy sight,
My strict Observer see;
And then by reverent love unite
My childlike heart to thee;
Still let me, till my days are past,
At Jesu's feet abide;
So shall He lift me up at last,
And seat me by His side.”

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

ONE of the finest pieces of poetry, both in conception and expression, in the English language, rich as it is in all the varieties of poetical composition, is the "Morning Hymn, of Adam and Eve, in Paradise," by Milton. The progenitors of the human race are represented, before they proceed to their daily task and daily pleasure "in dressing the garden, and keeping it," as acknowledging the "mercies, new every morning;" offering to God, as the priests of creation, the tribute of praise from every creature, and commending themselves to his paternal bounty and care.

"Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
 Their orisons, each morning duly paid
 In various style; for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced or sung
 Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
 Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous* verse
 More tunable than needed lute or harp
 To add more sweetness."

* Numerous,—not referring to quantity, but form; as if he had said, if such a word had been in the language—*numberous* verse,—language arranged in metre.

Whoever has an ear for the music of measured language, will always read the mellifluous lines of this hymn with fresh delight. Scarcely ever has their beautiful flow been equalled ; never exceeded. And the sentiments are worthy of the verse. The creatures are all addressed, and each is required to contribute to the full chorus of adoring praise. When all is so admirable, selection is difficult ; but let these lines be read aloud :—

“ Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, *dusky or grey,*
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise ;
Whether to deck with clouds the' uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud ; *and wave your tops, ye pines,*
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls : ye birds,
That singing up to heaven's-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings, and in your notes, his praise.”

And what is the great principle of this ?
The philosophy is as profound, as the poetry
and verse are exquisite. Nature is beautiful ;
but why ? It is the outward manifestation of
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the inward and essential beauty of the Creator, adapted to the constitution of man, and designed to lead him from effect to cause, from created to uncreated.

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !
Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair ! Thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable, who sitt’st above these heavens,
To us invisible ; or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine ! ”



